



## CALIFORNIA CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM#: 8

DATE OF MEETING: November 21, 2002

ACTION: X

### **PROJECT TITLE: FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA INFORMAL CHILD-CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROJECT**

#### **I. SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

**This is an action item to request \$8,000,000 over four years for the First 5 California Informal Child-Caregiver Support Project. The total cost of this project is approximately \$10,000,000. After careful review and assessment of our current activities and contracts, staff determined that an existing Clearinghouse/Best Practice subcontractor would be able to perform the following components within existing funds:**

- 1. Focus Groups:** Conduct focus groups and interviews throughout the state with informal child-caregivers in School Readiness Initiative communities to identify their interests and needs, to identify effective and culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach strategies for engaging them, and to provide feedback on materials for a supplemental packet (described below).
- 2. Supplemental Materials Packet:** Collect, review, and select supplemental educational materials to include in a packet to be used by informal child-caregivers to increase caregivers' knowledge in how to support the physical, social/emotional, and cognitive development and school readiness of young children. The packet could be included with the Kit for New Parents or distributed through School Readiness Initiative programs, the First 5 California (800) number, CBO programs, the First 5 California Clearinghouse, and/or other venues.
- 3. Resource Guide:** Produce a program resource guide for County Commissions, School Readiness programs, and other program administrators on effective and promising/best practices for reaching and educating informal child-caregivers.
- 4. Technical Assistance:** Provide initial technical assistance and training to all County Commissions, School Readiness programs, and other partners through four regional workshops on how to conduct focus groups and best practices from the Resource Guide to support those interested in developing or enhancing their own informal child-caregiver support programs.

After final negotiations with the contractor, staff may need to return with a consent item for any needed balance to complete the initial steps of the project.

**The remaining \$8,000,000 will be for implementation activities such as:**

- 1.** Specific distribution strategies for the utilization of the Kit for New Parents by informal child-caregivers.
- 2.** Supplemental materials packet production and distribution.



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3. County Commission demonstration programs in conjunction with our School Readiness Initiative to provide supports to informal child-caregivers along with additional training and technical assistance to support these programs.
4. Work in the areas of public education/media, policy, and research.

Staff will return after obtaining information from the initial research activities (focus groups and specifics on supplemental materials), for State Commissioner approval of additional components utilizing the \$8,000,000. An advisory group consisting of informal child-caregivers, designated representatives from County Commissions, the Advisory Committee on Diversity, other state agencies, and key stakeholders will continue to participate in the development and implementation of this project.

### II. **BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

CCFC has been developing programs with the goal of ensuring that children in all care-giving settings receive nurturing and supportive care in a stimulating and safe environment to improve children's school readiness. In an effort to support the entire continuum of caregivers, from parents and informal child-caregivers to professional early care teachers and directors, First 5 CCFC has funded a variety of projects. This project is designed to educate and support informal (family, relative, and neighbor) child-caregivers. In California, 54 percent of CalWORKs parents use license-exempt care and an estimated 25 percent of California families overall use relative and informal care. Latinos are more likely to use relative care than any other type of care (Capizzano, Adams, & Sonenstein, 2000; Fuller, Kagan, Chang, & Suzuki, 2001; CCFC Public Opinion Poll).

### III. **PROPOSAL**

#### Definition

For purposes of this action item, informal child-caregivers are those who provide care for children, either in the child's home or the caregiver's home, without being required to be licensed by the state child care licensing agency. Care legally exempt from California licensing requirements includes: care in a child's own home by an adult outside the immediate family, care by relatives, family child care homes that care for only one other family's children in addition to their own, and cooperative arrangements between parents for the care of their children where no payment or in-kind income is involved (Title 22). The terms "informal care" and "license-exempt care" are used interchangeably throughout this document.



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This proposal for the First 5 California Informal Child-Caregiver Support Project is based upon the recommendations made in the panel presentation to the State Commissioners and reflective of the vast amount of input received from a multitude of organizations and groups, including input from County Commissions.

The First 5 California Informal Child-Caregiver Support Project is designed to support services and programs that will lead to improvements in the quality of care of young children in informal care. Specifically the project goals are to:

- Identify and provide effective on-the-ground and culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach strategies for engaging informal child-caregivers in School Readiness Initiative communities, including those who do not receive public subsidies.
- Identify interests and needs of informal child-caregivers in School Readiness Initiative communities as well as related resources in the field in order to build on existing infrastructure and materials and ensure that First 5 CCFC strategies do not duplicate other efforts.
- Determine what strategies are successful and how strategies must be tailored to meet the needs of different categories of informal child-caregivers (e.g., intentional versus circumstantial). Specifically, do the strategies employed to educate/support child-caregivers:
  1. Avail them to more resources that they use over time?
  2. Prove useful/attractive to “circumstantial” caregivers?
  3. Modify knowledge, attitude, and/or behavior in the child-caregiver?
  4. Have a positive effect on the child in the several school readiness developmental domains?
- Improve informal child-caregivers’ access to training, education materials and opportunities provided by the California Department of Education (CDE), the Department of Social Services (DSS), and other entities.
- Determine whether investments in this target group have any advantage over general investments in parent education and public engagement strategies, especially considering the high turnover rate among informal child-caregivers (preliminary data from a yet unpublished study of subsidized license-exempt caregivers in Alameda County show almost 70 percent turnover in a one year time period).



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The elements of the proposed project include:

**A. Utilize an existing Clearinghouse/Best Practice subcontractor to perform the following and other related activities:**

**1. Focus Groups**

- Focus groups and interviews will be conducted in School Readiness Initiative communities in different areas in the state to identify informal child-caregivers' interests and needs, to identify effective and culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach strategies for engaging them, and to collect feedback on materials for a supplemental packet of educational materials (described below). The design will be developed with input from the advisory group.
- The Commission requires research on the interests, needs, and characteristics of California informal child-caregivers to design components of this project such as effective outreach strategies and a supplementary materials packet.
- Information needed includes: demographic characteristics, education and experience in child care, use of existing education/support services, identification of the kinds of information they are interested in obtaining and how they would like to obtain that information, what would draw them to programs, how to best inform them of services, and feedback on (1) which of existing materials would be useful (2) any major gaps there may be in materials and (3) whether the Kit for New Parents should be distributed to informal child-caregivers.
- The entity that coordinates the focus groups will be required to utilize grassroots organizations trusted by the local community to assist in conducting the focus groups.
- The organizations will use culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach strategies.
- Focus group sites and target populations will be chosen to represent regions reflecting the ethnic and language diversity of informal child-caregivers. They will be conducted around priority schools to coordinate with the First 5 CCFC School Readiness Initiative.
- The data should be disaggregated by (1) non-subsidized caregivers; (2) publicly subsidized informal caregivers; and (4) demographic characteristics, including child-caregivers serving migrant/seasonal farmworkers.



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### **2. Supplemental Materials Packet**

- The contractor will collect and review existing education materials used in programs supporting informal caregivers and parents at local and national levels and make a selection based on advisory group and focus group input, cost, and other factors. At a later date, staff will recommend funding to produce and disseminate these packets to informal child-caregivers.
- The packet could be included with the Kit for New Parents or distributed through School Readiness Initiative programs, the First 5 California (800) number, CBO programs, the First 5 California Clearinghouse, and/or the CDE License-Exempt Provider Training Project (described on the last page of this proposal).
- Materials could include: activity tip cards by age groups, activity calendars, developmental charts, videos/audiotapes, provider resource guides and referral numbers, books, or other suitable, multi-language materials to use with children birth to five. First 5 CCFC may be able to collaborate with CDE on development and distribution of materials as a means to extend the population reached.

### **3. Resource Guide**

- Produce a program resource guide for County Commissions, School Readiness programs, and other program administrators on effective and promising/best practices.
- The format of the guide would allow for adding new information or updates, resources specific to a local area, and easy access (web based). The guide would be updated annually for two years after initial development, and would include:
  - Information on international, national, state, and local programs that work effectively to reach and support informal child-caregivers.
  - Implementation designs, user-friendly technical assistance (TA) tools and resources compiled from various projects.
  - A list of selected resource entities, sources of funding/leveraging, existing resources and quality materials in various languages, training modules (train the trainer programs), and suggestions on outreach and other implementation activities.
  - Information from the focus groups.



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### 4. Technical Assistance

- The contract entity would provide various initial technical assistance and training opportunities, such as a transfer-of-knowledge symposium and/or regional workshops on how to conduct focus groups and best practices from the Resource Guide to all County Commissions, School Readiness programs, and other partners to develop or enhance their own informal child-caregiver support programs.
- The coordinating entity would use various methods to disseminate best practices information statewide and would assess the effectiveness of their various services.

**Funding Request:** An existing contractor will provide services for the focus groups, material selection, resource guide, and initial training and technical assistance. After final negotiations with the contractor, staff may need to return with a consent item for any needed balance to complete the initial steps of the project.

**Proposed Contractor:** First 5 CCFC will utilize an existing subcontractor and existing funds through a current contract. The contractor demonstrates an understanding of, and has experience in, working with culturally and linguistically diverse immigrant populations and will work with community level organizations that are trusted by local community members to conduct the focus groups.

### **B. Components to be Considered at a Future Date: The components listed below are staged to be considered at a future date based on outcomes from the focus groups and material review and the development of CDE's License-Exempt Provider Training Project (described on the following page).**

1. Increase the supply of the Kit for New Parents to make it available for informal caregivers and develop a training program and plan for distribution.
2. Produce and distribute supplemental materials for an informal caregiver packet to include with the Kit for New Parents or give access through the First 5 California (800) number, CBO programs, First 5 California Clearinghouse, and/or the CDE License-Exempt Provider Training Project.
3. Demonstration Projects. In coordination with the School Readiness Initiative and subject to sufficient funding, outcomes from the focus groups, and development of the CDE License-Exempt Provider Training Project, provide increased matching funds to five to ten School Readiness program sites to support the enhancement of programs dedicated to supporting informal child-caregivers through the integration of best/promising practices. Provide additional resources to these sites for three to five years.





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If demonstration sites proceed, additional technical assistance would be procured to assist the First 5 CCFC, County Commissions and others in determining the selection criteria for demonstration sites and in writing the RFF. This ensures that technical assistance would be in place prior to funding demonstration sites. Some development and technical assistance support would depend on the needs of any potential demonstration sites and the extent to which a curriculum and training program are developed by the California Department of Education.

### **Funding Request: Budget of \$8,000,000 for Future Components.**

#### **C. FIRST 5 CCFC Media, Public Relations, Policy, and Research Activities**

As directed by the Commission, staff has prepared a timeline that outlines when issues will come back to the Commission related to future actions regarding Media and Public Education, Policy/Advocacy, and Research, for all the Focus Areas as well as other initiatives/ideas. This will allow the Commission to discuss and decide future directions not on a piece meal basis but in a more comprehensive manner. Please refer to the Focus Area timeline.

Staff recommends the Commission consider the following:

##### **1. Media and Public Educations**

- Many experts in the early care and education field have advocated for the need for parent information on components of quality care to help the parents make informed decisions.
- However, the First 5 CCFC media contractor research indicates that approaching the issue of quality care with parents through media is likely to have limited impact. The research findings reveal that parents do not view child care as a desirable alternative in raising their children, yet parents do acknowledge that it is a reality and most believe that their child's child care situation is of high quality. Overall, the findings show that the messages related to child care that parents are interested in receiving are related to the area of preschool.
- Recommendations from the panelists included addressing quality care through the media, having a complementary public relations/free media component through public affairs programming on radio and TV to support quality early care and education, and developing a radio talk line to deliver programs such as story time and a child development talk and question time.



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### **2. Policy/Advocacy**

- As recommended in the Master Plan for Public Education, require forty-eight hours of pre-service (or in-service for current providers) professional development for all subsidized caregivers including those who are license-exempt. This recommendation could be tested through one or more of the possible demonstration sites.

### **3. Research**

- Each program component of the Informal Child-Caregiver Support Project will be evaluated.
- While focus groups will be very useful in providing information to develop a strategic plan for supporting informal child caregivers, they are limited in terms of their ability to generalize findings to a whole population.
- A two-part early care and education survey would provide more generalizable findings and could be considered to round out the Public Opinion Survey. Staff is in the process of reviewing the polling sample from the Public Opinion Poll to determine what additional specific data are needed in this area.

## **IV. INTERFACE/IMPACT ON OTHER PROGRAMS**

During the course of developing the Informal Child-Caregiver Discussion Paper, First 5 CCFC staff discussed with other State agencies the need for collaboration and a sharing of knowledge. An advisory group consisting of informal child-caregivers and designated representatives from County Commissions, other state agencies, and key stakeholders will continue to participate in the development and implementation of this project and will help ensure that services in this project enhance and complement rather than duplicate other efforts.

The State 2002/03 Budget includes a one-time allocation of \$9,800,000 available over the next three years from the federal Child Care and Development Fund to the CDE for a License-Exempt Provider Training Project to provide outreach to all license-exempt providers for the primary purposes of providing training based on State developed PreKindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines and principles of early childhood development, as well as health and safety issues. This funding also provides for the expansion of Trustline registration to extended family members, as determined necessary in conjunction with the DSS, and for the development of a certification process to qualify exempt providers for incentives to improve developmental outcomes for the children that they serve. The \$9,800,000 funding does not address research (i.e. focus groups) nor does it provide for a review of materials or best practices in the field. Furthermore, the training is not targeted to high priority schools.





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First 5 CCFC staff will continue to collaborate with CDE on the development of both projects to ensure that efforts complement one another rather than duplicate any services. The information obtained from the First 5 CCFC focus groups will be shared with other parties working with informal child-caregivers such as DSS, CDE, and the Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies. First 5 CCFC work related to the Informal Child-Caregiver Support project will support other agencies' work and help link and direct services to the population the First 5 CCFC is interested in serving.

**V. ATTACHMENTS**

☐ YES

☒ NO